August 5, 1968

Dear Mr. Emerson;

I share your high opinion of Mr. Wise based on his record. I have given his book on the CIA wide attention in numerous radio and TV broadcasts and consider it an important document very much in the national interest. That has nothing to do with his performance in this case.

It has been the unvarying practice of the Post to get a name to write a hunk of what it considers the story. This is a subject like no other. In each case you come up with a less than accurate piece on a subject where this invariably is against the national interest. Wise knew nothing about the subject matter. What may appear to an experienced reporter to be the truth is not, and that is particularly true in this case. You do not have access on this subject to anyone who can properly be described as "experienced people" because there are none commercially available. Your piece was not accurate because there was no way for you to make it accurate. You can buy brains in your business, intelligence, often people. But not knowledge.

Eventually, after much more hurt where there need be none if your intentions are honorable, you are going to learn that there are very few genuine experts in this field, that those highest touted are not. What Wise did was remarkably unjust besides from being wrong and it boiled down to propaganda. Instead of answering the latter I wrote him Mr. Rhoads retired, very quietly, as head of the Archives. Wise missed a much bigger story that is also a true story. He and you were used. Your piece was propaganda, where his reputation and previous writing were exploited (not necessarily by you).

As you should know, I have gone to some trouble to help the Post for no income or profit of any kind. What I seek is the truth, and when you use your vast circulation and the attention you can get for sycophantic writing you write a false national history. I seek the truth, nothing else. You almost always manage to write and publish something else.

I would appreciate it if you would refer my question to Mr. Wise. You can tell me the closing date of that issue and the date you received the story. I would like to know these things. My purpose is the establishment of an historically accurate record. Superficially, the indications are that Mr. Wise was given this material in advance of the date of alleged declassification. I had earlier requested some of the material and had been denied it. This is a fairly regular occurrence, despite denials. What I seek is withheld until someone not equipped to understand it makes the same request, hence it is released to him and my request is "forgotten" until after publication and they make the government the same time. There are other examples and on a number of occasions has.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg